



Impact Report 2023/24

At The Royal Marsden we deal with cancer every day, so we understand how valuable life is. And when people entrust their lives to us, they deserve the very best. That's why the pursuit of excellence lies at the heart of everything we do and why The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity exists.

Thanks to our supporters we continue to be there for everyone who needs us, now and in the future. We ensure our nurses, doctors and research teams can provide the very best care and develop lifesaving treatments, which are used across the UK and around the world.

From funding state-of-the-art equipment and groundbreaking research to creating modern patient environments, we will never stop looking for ways to improve the lives of people affected by cancer.

The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity
For a future beyond cancer.

Welcome to our Impact Report

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A letter from our Chairman and Managing Director

As we look back over the last year, we are immensely grateful to our dedicated supporters for everything they have helped us to achieve for people affected by cancer.

Thanks to their unwavering support, The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity has continued to fund innovative, impactful and life-saving work across The Royal Marsden, which in turn, benefits cancer patients everywhere.

In June 2023, we were delighted to celebrate a landmark milestone in the history of the hospital and the Charity, when His Royal Highness Prince William, Prince of Wales, opened the new Oak Cancer Centre at The Royal Marsden in Sutton. The new research and treatment facility, funded by the Charity, simply would not have been possible without the generosity of those who contributed to our biggest fundraising appeal to date.

Now over a year on, it has transformed patient care at Sutton and will continue to do so for years to come. Offering a modern, bright and calming environment for patients, it is also key to ensuring as many patients as possible

receive an early cancer diagnosis, so that treatment is more likely to be successful. Enabled by the innovative design of the Oak Cancer Centre, researchers from a range of tumour specialties now work alongside each other for the first time, meaning they can more easily share knowledge of the latest innovations and developments, helping to speed up the discovery of new treatments that will improve patient experience and save lives.

The Oak Cancer Centre exemplifies how the Charity's funding is critical to driving and expanding The Royal Marsden's ambitious research programme. By supporting the hospital's research infrastructure, the Charity helps to drive the development of more accurate and earlier diagnostic methods, bespoke therapies, and improved treatment approaches, underpinned by advanced data analytics and the latest technology. In turn, this research informs and supports the development of cancer care nationally and globally.

2023/24 was also a highly successful year for the Charity financially, with £29.7 million raised from donations and gifts in Wills, deployment of which will make a tremendous difference not only to cancer patients who come through the doors of the hospital, but also to those treated around the world benefitting from research funded by the Charity.

This year, we awarded over £19.6 million in grants, which included £4.2 million for research. This funding has supported key priority areas, from precision therapeutics and diagnostics to early diagnosis and data science. We are delighted that our investment in cellular immunotherapeutics research at The Royal Marsden has contributed to the US Food & Drug Administration granting accelerated approval for the Lifileucel treatment to be provided for advanced skin cancer patients in the US, making it the first T-cell treatment to be approved for solid tumours. This approval paves the way for this treatment to be approved more widely around the world.

Early-phase drug development is another exciting area of research we support, which tests novel anticancer treatments and drug combinations across multiple cancer types. Through a £1.5 million Paediatric Drug Development Unit grant awarded in 2023/24, supported by Oak Foundation with additional funding from the Charity, we are continuing to support the work of the highly specialist early-phase trials team in the Oak Paediatric and Adolescent Oncology Drug Development Unit, which gives young patients access to the latest treatments as part of clinical trials.

Our grant funding also enabled the installation of state-of-the-art equipment across the hospital this year, helping to ensure patients have access to the latest technological advances which enable swift and accurate diagnosis, as well as more precise treatment. This included a new mammography machine in the Charles Wolfson Rapid Diagnostic Centre in the Oak Cancer Centre, which offers additional types of mammography and enhanced image quality to help detect breast cancer, as well as equipment to support the digitisation of the Histopathology department, which has increased the team's diagnostic capacity.

We also continued to support the hospital in providing holistic care to patients to help them experience a better quality of life at every stage of their treatment. Our £1.14 million Quality of Services grant funded important services, including psychological support, prehabilitation and a broad range of complementary therapies, all of which receive excellent feedback from patients.

We were delighted to see so many of our supporters out in force at The Banham Marsden March and The Banham Marsden March at Home in May 2023, with these events raising an incredible £1.6 million. Later in 2023, the stunning Ever After Garden lit up Grosvenor Square once again, with over 25,000 illuminated white roses dedicated in memory of treasured family and friends.

In 2023/24 the Charity celebrated special milestones with some of our key partners, most notably 10 years of our partnership with Ralph Lauren. This longstanding corporate partnership has continued to thrive year-on-year, and we are extremely grateful for Ralph Lauren's ongoing support. Their generosity is making an enormous difference to patients every day, both through the research being carried out in the Ralph Lauren Centre for Breast Cancer Research and the new Ralph Lauren Research Wing in the Oak Cancer Centre. We were also delighted that fundraisers Le Cure completed their 10th annual cycle ride for The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity in August, bringing the total raised to over £2.9 million in support of the hospital's breast cancer research. December 2023 marked the 20th year of Celebrate a Life, which saw supporters name thousands of stars to hang on our Christmas trees in Chelsea and Sutton, raising nearly £135,000.

We are continually grateful to the Charity's staff and volunteers for their dedication to improving the lives of cancer patients and their loved ones. Their hard work, alongside the incredible support we receive from our donors and fundraisers, is what makes the progress highlighted in this report possible, and has such an incredible impact on patients' lives. Whether you took on a challenge, made a donation, included us in your Will or helped us in any other way, thank you so much for your support.



Sir Douglas Flint CBE
Chairman
The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity

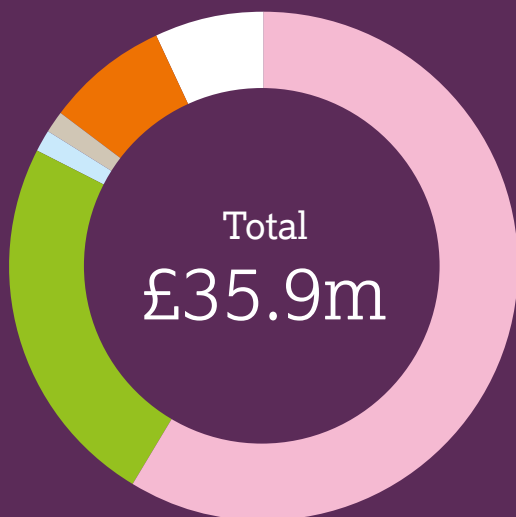


Antonia Dalmahoy
Managing Director
The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity

Financial highlights

Together, we raised £35.9 million, including £29.7 million from donations and gifts in Wills in 2023/24. Thank you to all our inspirational and generous supporters who made this possible and ensured we could continue to support the ground-breaking work of The Royal Marsden, for the benefit of cancer patients across the UK and around the world.

What we raised



- **£21.1m** Donations
- **£8.6m** Gifts in Wills
- **£0.5m** Gifts in kind
- **£0.5m** Trading
- **£2.8m** Investment
- **£2.5m** Other income

Income received this year exceeded money spent which means we are able to invest in exciting projects coming up in the future.

How we spent your money



- **£20.5m** Charitable activities
- **£7.6m** Raising funds
- **£0.1m** Investment and trading costs

Over 75p of every £1 donated was available to spend on life-saving research, the latest equipment, patient environments and treatment and care.

Funds raised for The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity support the incredible work carried out by teams at The Royal Marsden, which helps transform the lives of people with cancer and their loved ones.

The Charity funds life-saving research, enables hospital teams to provide outstanding treatment and care, purchases the latest equipment and funds world-class patient environments.



Equipment

We continued to invest in the latest equipment, enabling patients to benefit from improved methods of diagnosis and treatment as well as supporting vital research being carried out at the hospital.



Treatment and care

The Charity's funding continued to support hospital staff to deliver outstanding, holistic treatment and care for patients, supporting them at every stage of their cancer journey and beyond.



Research

We continued to fund groundbreaking research to help speed up the development of new treatments which will save lives around the world.



Patient environments

We continued to fund spacious, modern and peaceful environments for patients, including the state-of-the-art Oak Cancer Centre in Sutton which opened in 2023.

Our inspirational supporters

In 2023/24, our loyal supporters continued to help transform the lives of people with cancer around the world through their fundraising and committed support for The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity.

In 2023, we had 98 runners take part in the TCS London Marathon on behalf of the Charity, raising over £480,000. Among them was Emma Bishop, who raised an incredible £115,000, making her the second highest fundraiser overall for the 2023 event.

In April 2022, after a prolonged period of feeling unwell, mum-of-two Emma was admitted to hospital with a collapsed lung and suspected pneumonia. Instead, she was diagnosed with stage 4, incurable, mutant non-small cell

lung cancer which had spread to her lymph nodes, spine, ribs, pelvis and liver.

Emma said: “My diagnosis came as a complete shock. No-one really expects to find lung cancer in a 39-year-old non-smoker. As soon as I was diagnosed, I was referred to The Royal Marsden and began treatment under the care of Professor Sanjay Popat.

“When I was diagnosed, I thought that my goals, dreams and purpose had been taken from me. Instead, because of the targeted nature of my treatment at The Royal Marsden, I was able to find a new goal and managed to run the London Marathon. It was one of the best experiences of my life and it will be one of my greatest achievements. It was incredible to see family and friends, past employers and even complete strangers give their support.

“I wanted to show that people living with cancer are still living – we can do normal things and go above and beyond that too. I also wanted to say thank you to everyone

at The Royal Marsden who has worked so hard to give me more time, which is quite simply the most precious resource we have. My treatment has allowed me to celebrate my 40th birthday, see my grandmother turn 90, my son turn five, and my daughter turn six.

“I want to do anything I can to help in this amazing time of accelerating change and to be part of all the progress which is being made with cancer treatment and research, to help more people like me.”

“*When I was diagnosed, I thought that my goals, dreams and purpose had been taken from me. Instead, because of the targeted nature of my treatment at The Royal Marsden, I was able to find a new goal and managed to run the London Marathon.*”

Emma, patient at The Royal Marsden.

Emma Bishop, patient
at The Royal Marsden.





Wes Mulder, running the Royal Parks Half Marathon 2023.

Wes Mulder set himself the goal of completing 40 events to mark his 40th year. He travelled all over the country and completed 17 runs, 10 cycle rides, six swims, five triathlons and two duathlons – raising over £17,000 for the Charity.

Wes' eight-year-old son Huey was treated at The Royal Marsden for acute lymphoblastic leukaemia in 2017 when he was just 15 months old. Huey was cared for in the Oak Centre for Children and Young People and has now been in remission for more than three years.

"All the doctors and nurses took such incredible care of Huey," says Wes. "It was tough to go through as a family, but being so well looked after by The Royal Marsden made such a difference.

"I only now realise how ambitious 40 events in a year was and can say with pride that I smashed it! I have some lifelong memories from along the way, but it was the smiles on my children's faces after each event that I'll remember the most."

All the doctors and nurses took such incredible care of Huey. It was tough to go through as a family, but being so well looked after by The Royal Marsden made such a difference.

Wes, supporter of The Royal Marsden.

Breast cancer patient Hasna De Four is on the PAveMenT trial, receiving a combination of a targeted drug (Palbociclib) and immunotherapy (Avelumab). The trial is led by the team in the Ralph Lauren Centre for Breast Cancer Research, which opened in 2016 thanks to supporters of The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity, including a generous donation from Ralph Lauren. Hasna has recently completed 40 rounds of treatment on the trial and her cancer has been stable for the last three and a half years.

Hasna said: “Being on a trial led from the Ralph Lauren Centre for Breast Cancer Research has given me precious extra time with my family, which I am so grateful for. I have been able to become a grandmother for the first time and I am able to see my family growing up each day.”

In 2023, the Charity celebrated 10 years of partnership with Ralph Lauren. Hasna generously supported many activities to mark this special milestone and thanked Ralph Lauren for their exceptional

support. This included switching on the lights on The Ralph Lauren Giving Tree for Bond Street in aid of The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity, alongside her daughter Hadassah. The public were able to dedicate a star for someone special by making a donation to the Charity.

We are immensely grateful to all our inspirational supporters for all they do for The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity.



Hasna De Four, patient
at The Royal Marsden.



Equipment

Personalised treatment using the latest technology

Funding from the Charity enables the hospital to purchase state-of-the-art equipment so clinicians can diagnose cancer as quickly and accurately as possible, as well as provide the very best treatment to patients.

A high-capacity slide scanner in the digital histopathology department.





Louise D'Costa, Superintendent Radiographer in a mammography room in the Oak Cancer Centre.



Grants awarded by the Charity to fund a range of vital medical equipment for the hospital resulted in the installation of a new mammography machine and are funding items including a new linear accelerator, which supports the use of the latest radiotherapy technology.

This year we provided a £5.1 million equipment grant to the hospital as well as a £1.39 million grant to support the digitisation of the hospital's histopathology service, so that more patients can receive a swift and accurate diagnosis.

The new linear accelerator allows the hospital to introduce the most recent advance in radiotherapy technology, known as online Adaptive Radiotherapy (oART). The Charity awarded £1.93 million as part of the Equipment grant for the specialist computing system called ARTemis, which supports the oART technology.

Instead of using general patient population data to plan radiotherapy treatments, oART enables treatment plans to be personalised to each individual patient. Treatment can be adapted on a daily basis in real time, accounting for changes in the position of a patient's tumour and anatomy. This means tumours are targeted more precisely which minimises damage to healthy tissue and helps to reduce potential side effects for patients. Being able to adapt treatment in this way also

avoids patients needing to return to hospital for further scans or treatment sessions, lessening their anxiety and helping them get back to their lives sooner.

In May 2023, the new mammography machine was installed in the Charles Wolfson Rapid Diagnostic Centre in the Oak Cancer Centre. Funded through a previous equipment grant, the new machine enables potentially lifesaving mammography examinations, providing enhanced image quality, lower doses of radiation and improved rates of cancer detection for those with suspected breast cancer.

Featuring rounded compression paddles and ergonomic features, the mammography machine aids patient comfort during procedures while capturing high quality images. Alongside conventional mammography (which offers a 2D image of breast tissue), the new machine enables the hospital to offer two additional types of mammography, known as tomosynthesis and contrast enhanced spectral mammography (CESM).

Tomosynthesis produces high definition, 'slice' images of breast tissue at different angles, which can be reconstructed into a 3D image, making diagnosis easier and quicker. CESM uses a contrast injection dye to reveal areas of increased blood supply within the breast. This helps identify breast cancer, as cancerous tissue typically has a larger blood supply than normal tissue. This type of mammogram is very detailed and shows the precise location and measurement of lesions. It is often performed on patients where standard breast imaging tests are inconclusive, helping to reduce the need to recall patients for more imaging.

"Thanks to the Charity funding, the new mammography machine offers contrast mammography, which is helping us to diagnose more cancers, including those which are harder to detect," says Louise D'Costa, Superintendent Radiographer in the Charles Wolfson Rapid Diagnostic Centre.





Aanzhi Albert, Biomedical Scientist
in the NIHR Centre for Molecular
Pathology, Sutton.



Funding digital detection

The £1.39 million Digital Histopathology grant, awarded in 2023/24, together with previous funding awarded in 2021/22, has supported the digitisation of the histopathology department, where patients' tissue samples are processed and examined, enabling an accurate diagnosis to be made. With our funding, the hospital has purchased and installed state-of-the-art scanners and slide printers, integral to the transformation of this service.

Tissue samples are usually examined on a glass slide, using a microscope and a highly trained eye. Now it is possible to convert physical slides into digital images using the new scanners. These high-resolution images can then be viewed and analysed on a computer screen. Scanning and uploading slides in this way means images can be shared much more easily with colleagues around the world and expertly analysed alongside other data, such as scans.

Modernising the hospital's existing histopathology service allows for a swifter, more responsive, diagnostic pathway for patients. This is crucial, in the face of likely expected growth in demand for this service, due to the hospital's increased focus on early detection and continued improvements in personalised care.

The Charity's investment in digital histopathology also supported groundbreaking research carried out by the Integrated Pathology Unit (IPU) at The Royal Marsden and the Institute of Cancer Research, London (ICR), which was also established thanks to previous

funding through a Charity Research grant. Under the leadership of Professor Manuel Salto-Tellez, the team is harnessing the combined power of digital pathology and artificial intelligence (AI). Digitised pathology images are a key part of the IPU's research. AI can be used to detect wider patterns and deeper levels of information within these images, such as levels of key cancer proteins, the presence of mutations or a tumour's individual genetic signature. Gathering more insights about specific types of cancer will then help to develop more personalised treatments for patients that are more effective.

A strong digital pathology diagnostic service with a comprehensive digital database is a foundation stone to opening up many more avenues for our research, so we can enable patients to live longer and better lives."

Prof Manuel Salto-Tellez.



Equipment



Treatment and care



Research



Patient environments

My story

Alex

Alex Roche was diagnosed with breast cancer in March 2024 after undergoing diagnostic tests in the Charles Wolfson Rapid Diagnostic Centre in the Oak Cancer Centre. The cancer was detected using a state-of-the-art mammography machine, funded by the Charity.

“When I first found a lump in February 2024, I went to my GP to get it checked out. The GP initially thought it might just be a nodule on my ribs. She gave me a thorough examination and referred me to The Royal Marsden for further investigations.

“My first mammogram in the Oak Cancer Centre still didn’t show the lump clearly, but the nurses were so brilliant and wanted to rule out anything, so asked me if I wanted to have more tests done that day.

“The second mammogram I had was when it showed up. The team had me in every possible position and got so much imaging so they could see the lump. I’m on HRT treatment and my cancer is estrogen receptive - this sometimes makes your breast tissue denser, which then makes it more difficult for lumps to show up through screening and scans.

“I’ve had mammograms, CT scans, MRI scans and an MRI guided biopsy in the Oak Cancer Centre. The staff use every available tool to give you an accurate diagnosis and it can all be done on the same day.

“I was put under the care of Miss Rachel O’Connell and when my biopsy results came through and my exact diagnosis was confirmed, she took me through her plan of action - she was amazing.”

Alex underwent surgery known as a wide local excision to remove the cancer. She is now having a course of radiotherapy.

“My husband and I were able to do a recent safari trip to South Africa which was just incredible, so special. I’m so glad we were able to make this trip to celebrate my 60th birthday which is coming up next year. Rachel and The Royal Marsden teams did everything they could to ensure we were able to make this trip.

“I feel like I’ve had the absolute best treatment and care at The Royal Marsden. I can’t fault anything. You put your trust in the staff, and they take that really seriously.

“What The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity does is absolutely priceless. I don’t think I can ever say thank you enough to the hospital and the Charity. I feel humbled that I’ve been able to be treated at The Royal Marsden in the Oak Cancer Centre.

“I think the Charity donors absolutely need to hear this sort of feedback, especially about the new Centre. Not just about how their financial support is making a huge difference but how much we, as patients, appreciate their time, energy and the thought which they put into donating.”

“What The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity does is absolutely priceless. I don’t think I can ever say thank you enough to the hospital and the Charity.”

Alex, patient at
The Royal Marsden.

Alex Roche, patient
at The Royal Marsden.



Equipment



Treatment and care



Research



Patient environments



Treatment and care

Providing exceptional patient care

This year we continued to enable staff at The Royal Marsden to provide outstanding treatment and care, ensuring patients' physical and psychological needs are supported throughout their treatment and recovery.

Nina Lopes, patient at The Royal Marsden.



Adrian Fautly, Specialist
Exercise Instructor.





Equipment



Treatment and care



Research



Patient environments

This year, our £1.14 million Quality of Services grant and our £756,000 Innovation and Education grant have supported a broad range of initiatives and services which improve the experience of patients at The Royal Marsden and across the UK. The grants funded holistic support for patients, including complementary therapies, psychological support and the hospital's arts programme.

Living well with, and beyond, cancer

Thanks to the Charity's Quality of Services grant, a broad range of complementary therapies are available across The Royal Marsden, for both inpatients and outpatients, including massage therapy, aromatherapy and reflexology.

This service provides vital support to patients with complex symptoms, from pain and anxiety to altered body image, throughout their treatment journey.

This grant also supported the Hospital2Home (H2H) service, which aids the transition of care from the hospital to the community. The service enables patients to be cared for in the most appropriate setting, decreasing unnecessary hospital admissions and leading to improved quality of life for patients. Since the inception of H2H at The Royal Marsden, there has been a significant improvement in supporting patients to discuss, document and achieve their end-of-life preferences.

We also continued to help fund the prehabilitation service at the hospital through this grant, which works with patients to prepare them physically and mentally for cancer treatment, such as surgery. The team uses physiotherapy to provide structured exercise support to patients, as well as nutrition and emotional wellbeing support, to ensure patients are fit and healthy enough for treatment and to help them recover more quickly.

The same grant also funded the Adult Psychological Support Service, helping support patients with issues that have arisen as a result of cancer diagnosis and treatment. Patients can speak to experienced counsellors, psychotherapists and psychologists about their concerns and feelings, as well as develop coping strategies. Specialist staff are also on hand to work with couples and families.

Through our £756,000 Innovation and Education grant, we continued to fund the Pre-Doctoral Research Fellowship Programme which aims to deliver improvements in treatment and care that can benefit patients not just at The Royal Marsden but around the UK. In 2023/24, projects included research into speech and swallowing outcomes and interventions for patients following tongue cancer surgery, as well as prostate cancer genetics research.

Through this same grant, we also continued to support the hospital's art programme, which features an evidence-based, patient-focused offering of accessible arts projects, such as Vocal Beats, which enables patients to participate in music-making while in hospital.

My story



Jon Organ, patient at The Royal Marsden.



Jon

Jon Organ received treatment at The Royal Marsden following his diagnosis of stage four laryngeal cancer (a type of throat cancer) and cancer of the vocal cords. He underwent total laryngectomy surgery - which removed all of the larynx, the area of the throat containing the vocal cords - as well as chemotherapy and radiotherapy. He has since had to learn how to talk and eat again.

Jon, 57, has benefited hugely from the psychological support team at The Royal Marsden, which is supported by funding from The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity, as part of his post-surgery rehabilitation. "Mental health is one of the most important parts of the cancer journey. When you first get a cancer diagnosis, you don't really understand it. But once you're going through the process and particularly once your treatment is over, this is when you really need the mental health support, especially if you're non-verbal. I've learnt that one of the bravest things you can do is ask for help, it's not a weakness to ask for help if you're struggling.

"Some of the biggest battles with cancer are in your head. I contacted my clinical team to tell them I felt down and low. They referred me to the psychological support team, and I did a six-week, online mindfulness course with them as part of the support they offered me. The support I've had from this team has calmed me down and helped me to find myself again. It's amazing that this is something the hospital offer.

"Patients can't be expected to go through surgery, chemotherapy and radiotherapy and then just return to their normal lives, disfigured and struggling. Intimacy has changed, home life has changed, everything is so different. Teams like psychological support are so vital, and I'm really thankful to the Charity for funding this service that has helped me so much and all The Royal Marsden teams for saving my life.

"My initial outlook when I got my diagnosis was to be full of anger. I felt like cancer was taking everything away from me, including my work. However, now I feel like it's given me a lot as well. It's given me new friends and a different purpose in life. I've found poetry, painting and mindfulness. It's given me strength that I never knew I had."

“Teams like psychological support are so vital, and I'm really thankful to the Charity for funding this service that has helped me so much and all The Royal Marsden teams for saving my life.”

Jon, patient at The Royal Marsden.



Equipment



Treatment and care



Research



Patient environments

Supporting innovation in cancer care

The Charity funds the Pre-Doctoral Research Fellowship programme at The Royal Marsden, enabling staff to carry out their own research to deliver improvements in patient treatment and care. The programme, funded through our £756,000 Innovation and Education grant, helps to train the next generation of cancer researchers.

Clinical Pharmacist, Jurga McLean, is undertaking a two-year Fellowship on incorporating patient needs into pharmacist education. Many patients receive oral systemic anti-cancer therapy (SACT) such as chemotherapy, but Jurga noted that some patients can struggle with taking their oral SACT correctly.

“Oral chemotherapy is often given in complex regimens, so good communication from healthcare professionals is essential to ensure patients receive the best possible results from their treatments. We may see patients for whom English isn’t their first language, or other patients who don’t have the confidence to ask questions if they are unsure about their

chemotherapy regimen. We have a diverse population of patients and we want to ensure that information about cancer treatments is relayed to everyone in a way that they understand.

“Some patient groups – such as those who are fasting for religious reasons – may also need a specific kind of support from pharmacy teams, so tailoring the chemotherapy information to their needs is important.”

Jurga’s research is focused on evaluating how information about chemotherapy is communicated to patients and where improvements can be made. Engaging with patients, pharmacists and pharmacy technicians, the aim is for these findings to be incorporated into pharmacist education and help to benefit cancer patients not just at The Royal Marsden but across the UK.

“We have a diverse population of patients and we want to ensure that information about cancer treatments is relayed to everyone in a way that they understand.”

Jurga,
Clinical Pharmacist.

Jurga McLean, Clinical Pharmacist.





Equipment



Treatment and care



Research



Patient environments

My story

Marie

When she was 16 years old, Marie Beall was diagnosed with alveolar rhabdomyosarcoma, a rare type of sarcoma. Following successful treatment at The Royal Marsden, she went on to mark her five-year remission milestone. However, just a month later, she relapsed and was back under the care of the hospital.

It was then that Marie – who has a passion for singing, dancing and performing arts – met the Vocal Beats team. Supported by funding from The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity, Vocal Beats gives young cancer patients the opportunity to participate in music-making.

“At this time, I was conscious of how I sounded due to some surgery I’d had. The Vocal Beats musicians finally got me singing a bit, which I hadn’t done in almost a year. I was terrified, as I thought I sounded different – I had no confidence.

“The team said they were organising a performance at The Roundhouse in Camden for a group of young people from The Royal Marsden. I was very hesitant at first, but Stac Dowdeswell (from the Vocal Beats team) said she really wanted me to be part of it, so I went along and did some rehearsals and met other patients.

“Vocal Beats has been amazing, as it gave me my confidence back. The night of the performance, the audience was made up of lots of our friends and family. There were also nurses from the hospital who came, which was so nice. I’ve now taken part in this event twice.

“I think as a patient, you’re used to your support network being made up of doctors and nurses, and the questions you’re asked by them are often quite technical about symptoms and how you’re feeling. Having the Vocal Beats team to talk to and have a laugh with made such a difference to my hospital experience. To know that they were there to support you was amazing. You could try different instruments with them, have a sing song – it made things feel normal.”

Having now completed her treatment, Marie continues to come to The Royal Marsden for monitoring scans. “I’ve been able to get back into songwriting and playing the piano. Cancer takes so much from you, so feeling like yourself again is a huge milestone. The Vocal Beats team has helped me hugely with this - they continue to be my biggest supporters.”

“Having the Vocal Beats team to talk to and have a laugh with made such a difference to my hospital experience. To know that they were there to support you was amazing. You could try different instruments with them, have a sing song – it made things feel normal.”

Marie, patient at The Royal Marsden.



Marie Beall, patient at The Royal Marsden, performing at the Vocal Beats performance at the Camden Roundhouse. Photo credit: Isabel Marshall Photography.



Equipment



Treatment and care



Research



Patient environments



Research

Pioneering breakthroughs to transform the lives of cancer patients

The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity supports life-saving research at the hospital, helping to improve diagnosis and develop innovative treatments for the benefit of cancer patients not just at The Royal Marsden, but across the UK and around the world.

Claire Swift, Research Scientist, analysing samples
in the Ralph Lauren Centre for Breast Cancer Research.



In 2023/24, our £4.2 million Research grant supported the hospital's ambitious research programme, helping to develop new and improved ways of diagnosing and treating cancer for the benefit of patients globally.

Thanks to this grant, the Charity supported vital areas such as precision therapeutics and diagnostics, early phase drug development, early diagnosis and data science.

Our investment in cellular immunotherapeutics research at the hospital has supported the C-144-01 clinical trial, a global study involving multiple cancer centres, including The Royal Marsden, where it was led by Dr Andrew Furness, Consultant Medical Oncologist, who is part funded by the Charity.

The trial explored the use of a treatment called Lifileucel in patients with advanced melanoma, whose cancer has not responded to other treatments. Lifileucel is a type of Tumor-infiltrating lymphocyte (TIL) therapy, where T-cells from the patient's own immune system are used to attack cancer cells.

More than a third of patients on the study responded well to this innovative treatment, and the results show that TIL therapy could help to extend patients' lives, providing a new form of treatment to those who currently have no other options.

This international research collaboration has led to the US Food & Drug Administration granting accelerated approval in February 2024 for Lifileucel to be provided for advanced skin cancer patients in the US, making it the

first T-cell treatment to be approved for solid tumours. This approval paves the way for this treatment to be approved elsewhere around the world.

Our investment also supported breast cancer research such as the TRAK-ER trial, which aims to identify signs of relapse in some breast cancer patients using circulating tumour DNA (ctDNA) blood tests. Testing a patient's blood for ctDNA can detect very low levels of a tumour's genetic material, enabling clinicians to identify the risk of relapse at the very earliest stage before cancer can be seen on a scan, meaning treatment can be adapted to try and prevent relapse from happening.

Thanks to the Charity's £1.5 million grant to support paediatric drug development, awarded in 2023/24, we continued to support the work of the highly specialist early phase trials team in the Oak Paediatric and Adolescent Oncology Drug Development Unit. We are extremely grateful to Oak Foundation for continuing to support this important work through The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity.

The grant has supported Stratified-Medicine Paediatrics ('SM-Paeds'), a national advanced molecular tumour profiling study, led by The Royal Marsden and the ICR. Molecular tumour profiling maps the unique changes in the DNA of a tumour, giving clinicians

information to help tailor the patient's treatment approach to make it as effective and precise as possible. This study completed its recruitment in 2023/24, having recruited over 800 patients with relapsed solid tumours and haematological malignancies, with a view to detecting genomic abnormalities, for the purpose of giving targeted therapies where possible.

The next generation sequencing panel used in the study, developed at The Royal Marsden (supported by previous funding from the Charity), has now been adopted into routine NHS standard of care. 'SM-Paeds2' will open in late 2024, which will focus on newer techniques for smaller amounts of tissue, as well as liquid biopsies, to reduce the burden of invasive biopsies for patients.

The grant also supports the DETERMINE trial, led by Charity-funded Dr Lynley Marshall, Consultant in Paediatric and Adolescent Oncology Drug Development. It is the first UK national precision medicine trial in rare cancers, testing a range of therapies specifically targeting key genetic changes in adult, paediatric and teenage and young adult tumours. If successful, the trial will provide new treatments for those who have run out of options and improve survival for those with rare types of cancer.

Finally, thanks to Charity funding, The National Cancer Prehabilitation Collaborative has been established this year, uniting a network of multi-disciplinary experts from across the country. This was made possible thanks to Andrew and Susan Bond, Charles Wilson CBE and Dr Rowena Olegario's generous support of The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity. The aim is to develop more robust research, which will pave the way for the development of a national prehabilitation programme to be implemented across the NHS, providing personalised, effective prehabilitation support for cancer patients across the country.

Patients who have undergone prehabilitation are more likely to have more treatment options, leave hospital sooner after surgery, cope better with the side-effects of cancer treatment and have better long-term health. The National Cancer Prehabilitation Collaborative's first year has been a great success, with the launch of an ambitious research programme and strong progress recruiting PhD Research Fellows.



Dr Andrew Furness,
Consultant Medical Oncologist.



Equipment



Treatment and care



Research



Patient environments

My story

Zoe

46-year-old Zoe Phillips was diagnosed with stage four metastatic melanoma in 2023 after previously being treated for skin cancer on her neck.

She came to The Royal Marsden and is under the care of Dr Andrew Furness, Consultant Medical Oncologist and Solid Tumour Cellular Therapy Lead, whose role is part funded by The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity.

Zoe is currently on a clinical trial where she is being treated with a type of T-cell immunotherapy known as TIL therapy, which involves harnessing the patient's own immune system to fight cancer.

"Two and a half years after being treated for stage two melanoma, I had a pea sized lump appear under my skin on my rib. When I was told this was a tumour on my lung and I now had stage four melanoma, I was devastated.

"I was offered the opportunity to join a clinical trial at The Royal Marsden and it was a no-brainer. London is about three hours away from us in Dorset, but I was willing to do anything.

"I came up to The Royal Marsden and they took my tumour away and sent it to America so they could take out the cancer cells and harvest all the good T-cells so that they could make more of them. I had a week of chemotherapy, then the billions of T-cells that had been harvested and grown overseas were put back into my body. After this, I had six sessions of treatment to boost my immune system and stimulate the T-cell activity. That treatment felt really strange, my body felt like I had jumped into freezing cold water!

"Three weeks later, I was able to go home but came back to the hospital regularly for monitoring and to have my Pembrolizumab treatment, a type of immunotherapy. Dr Furness told me this treatment will boost my immune system and now, hopefully, my own body should know to get rid of any other cancer cells."

Six weeks after Zoe's TIL therapy treatment, her scans showed that the tumours had disappeared.

"It's now been eight months with seven clear scans which show I'm stable. There is no cancer in my body at the moment, which is

amazing. Going from being told I was probably going to die, to being stable on this trial – it's just been such a rollercoaster of a journey, I feel so lucky.

"After my experiences, I understand why raising money for The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity is so important. I still can't believe what has happened with the trial, some days it doesn't feel real, I have to pinch myself.

"I cannot thank The Royal Marsden enough for what they've done, they've saved my life. The hospital is amazing and the research they do is changing lives and giving people like me more time with their families."

Solid tumour cellular therapy research at The Royal Marsden is funded by supporters of The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity including a generous donation from Nationwide Building Society, and also funding from The National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Biomedical Research Centre at The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust and the Institute of Cancer Research, London.



Zoe Phillips, patient
at The Royal Marsden,
with husband Marc.



Equipment



Treatment and care



Research



Patient environments



Dr Irene Chong,
Head of Clinical Oncology,
in the Oak Cancer Centre, Sutton.

Pioneering research to help personalise treatment

The Charity continued to invest in precision therapeutics through the 2023/24 Research grant, including supporting the research of Dr Irene Chong, Head of Clinical Oncology, whose role is part-funded by the Charity. Her research is focused on lower gastrointestinal cancers.

One study led by Dr Chong is using genomic sequencing to analyse the blood and tissue of rectal cancer patients, to help predict sensitivity and resistance to radiotherapy. Identifying the genetic mechanisms responsible for this could be life-changing for some patients, as it could mean that they have the option of avoiding surgery and a permanent stoma.

Dr Diana Tait, Consultant Clinical Oncologist at The Royal Marsden, pioneered the groundbreaking Deferral of Surgery study at the hospital, which offered some rectal cancer patients who completely respond to chemotherapy and radiotherapy the chance to avoid surgery which would leave them with a permanent stoma. As a result of this study, the approach of closely monitoring some rectal cancer patients, rather than them undergoing surgery, is being followed in cancer centres across the UK.

“I’m building on this work by exploring how to genetically identify rectal cancer patients who are likely to benefit from non-invasive treatment rather than surgery,” explains Dr Chong.

“This research could also identify those who are unlikely to respond to radiotherapy, meaning they could be spared unnecessary side effects. It could also help

clinicians identify drugs that can be used in combination with radiotherapy to enhance a patient’s response to treatment.

“Having a stoma bag can significantly affect a patient’s quality of life, so having a system of close monitoring for some patients can allow them to live without a stoma for longer. Also, by finding out why some patients respond well to non-invasive treatment and others do not, we can personalise the way in which we approach their treatment.”

Dr Chong’s research in this area is also supported by Red Trouser Day and The Syncona Foundation, through The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity.

Harnessing artificial intelligence

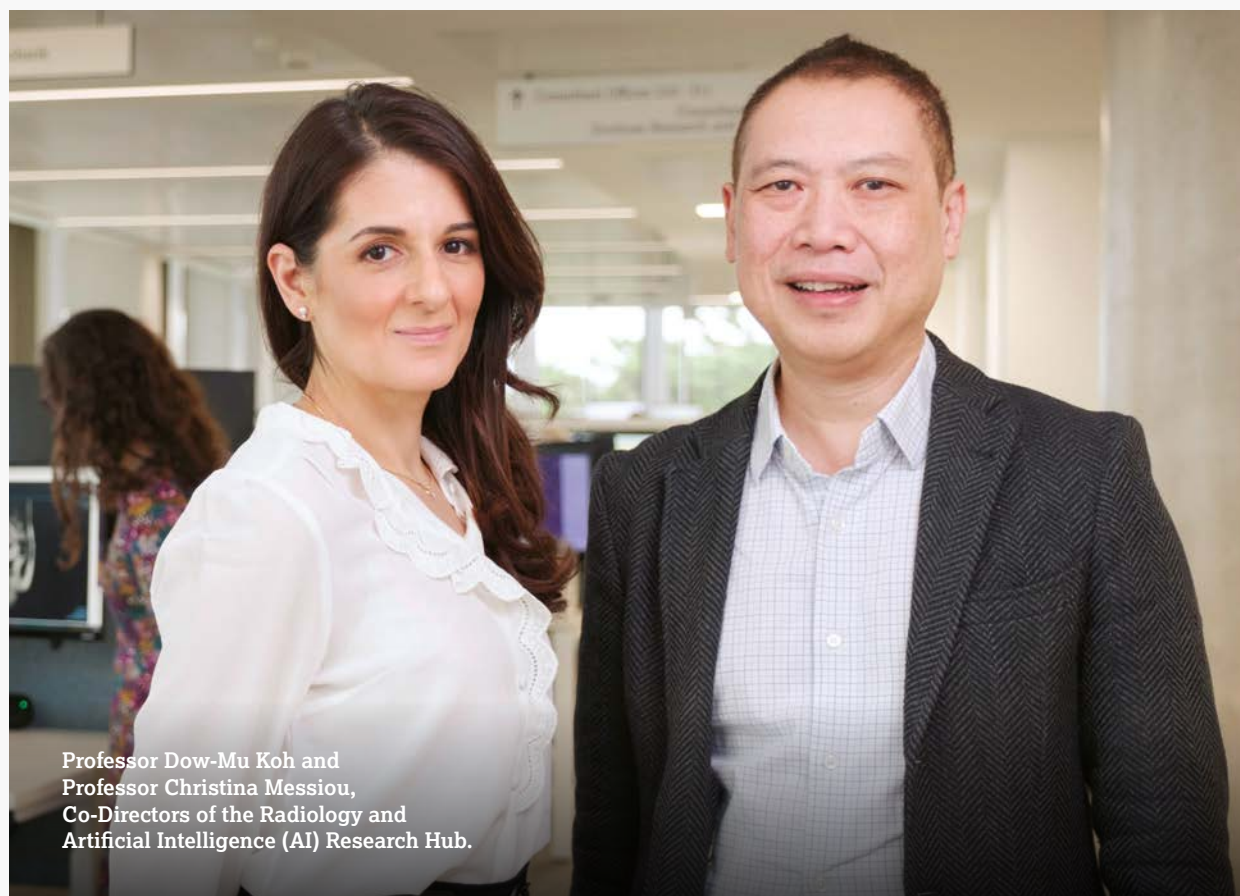
Funding through the 2023/24 Research grant supported the RADSARC-R study, which found AI could be around twice as accurate as a biopsy at grading the aggressiveness of some sarcomas.

The study, led by Professor Christina Messiou, Consultant Radiologist, tested and developed an AI algorithm aimed at improving the diagnosis and grading of retroperitoneal sarcoma – a soft tissue sarcoma which develops in the back of the abdomen and is currently hard to diagnose and

treat, due to its location and rarity. This innovative AI tool could help tailor treatment more accurately, speed up diagnosis and could eventually be applied to other cancer types, potentially benefiting thousands of patients each year.

High-grade tumours can indicate aggressive disease, and this tool could help ensure high-risk patients are identified and get urgent treatment. Meanwhile, low-risk patients could be spared unnecessary treatments, follow-up scans and hospital visits. It could also speed up diagnosis by supporting clinicians – who may never have previously seen a retroperitoneal sarcoma due to its rarity – in more accurately identifying the subtype.

Professor Messiou said: “We’re incredibly excited by the potential of this state-of-the-art technology, which could lead to patients having better outcomes through faster diagnosis and more effectively personalised treatment. As patients with retroperitoneal sarcoma are routinely scanned with CT, we hope this tool will eventually be used globally, ensuring that not just specialist centres like The Royal Marsden – who see sarcoma patients every day – can reliably identify and grade the disease. None of this work would be possible without the support of the Charity, for which we are incredibly grateful.”



Professor Dow-Mu Koh and Professor Christina Messiou, Co-Directors of the Radiology and Artificial Intelligence (AI) Research Hub.



Equipment



Treatment and care



Research



Patient environments

My story



Jo

Jo Lee was diagnosed with lobular breast cancer when she was just 39 years old. After having surgery and radiotherapy elsewhere, Jo joined the TRAK-ER trial, led by Professor Nick Turner, Consultant Medical Oncologist and Head of the Ralph Lauren Centre for Breast Cancer Research at The Royal Marsden, which was supported through our 2023/24 Research grant, as well as funding from Pfizer, Invitae and Le Cure.

The trial aims to detect the signs of relapse earlier in oestrogen receptor-positive (ER+) breast cancer patients by looking for tiny amounts of cancer DNA in the blood, known as circulating tumour DNA (ctDNA). This ctDNA can be detected several months to years before cancer recurrence can be seen on a scan. Trial participants have regular blood tests and those who are identified as being at risk of relapse have their treatment tailored to try to stop the disease from returning.

“When I first heard about TRAK-ER, I thought what an incredible opportunity to have this type of surveillance every three months – a way to keep my mind at ease,” said Jo. “At my first consultation at The Royal Marsden, they told me the TRAK-ER trial would involve making a ctDNA test for me – a blood test which was specifically designed for me and my cancer.” To Jo’s shock, in June 2023, her

first ctDNA test showed cancer in her system. “The TRAK-ER team called me with my results, and I couldn’t believe it. I moved onto the treatment phase of the trial and this will continue for two years, with CT scans every six months. I then have a further surveillance of three years. I feel so fortunate to have this opportunity.

“I know that The Royal Marsden is one of the top cancer hospitals in the world and I feel honoured to be a patient there. Being able to access the TRAK-ER trial means so much to me, it could be lifesaving. I know that if anything was to pop up, it can be dealt with at an early stage and really fast. There is always someone at the end of the telephone to speak to at the hospital – the support is amazing. Professor Nick Turner and his team are so great, they’re so friendly and supportive.”

Jo, an avid runner who has taken part in 63 Marathons, took part in the TCS London Marathon this year, raising over £3,800 to support The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity as a way of giving back.

“Knowing that The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity is funding research is so reassuring. Research to me gives me hope that people might not have to go through a cancer diagnosis at a later stage, that early detection can pick things up before it gets to the stage where it’s life threatening.”

Jo Lee, patient at
The Royal Marsden.



Equipment



Treatment and care



Research



Patient environments



Patient environments

Driving research advances to transform patient care

The Charity funds world-class environments at The Royal Marsden, which play a vital role in extending, improving and saving the lives of cancer patients. From providing comfortable surroundings which enhance wellbeing and recovery, to enabling groundbreaking research which leads to the development of new treatments, our supporters are helping to transform cancer care globally.

Oak Cancer Centre.





The future of cancer care and research

Thanks to the incredible generosity of our donors, partners and fundraisers who supported The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity's £70 million appeal, including a £25 million donation from Oak Foundation, we saw a major milestone reached in June 2023 with the opening of the Oak Cancer Centre by His Royal Highness Prince William, Prince of Wales. The state-of-the art facility enables staff to provide world-class treatment and care to even more patients and save more lives, now and in the future.

With 66 treatment chairs and five side rooms, the Olayan Day Care Unit offers a modern, bright and calming environment for patients receiving chemotherapy and other supportive treatments, while The Charles Wolfson Rapid Diagnostic Centre has enabled the expansion of The Royal Marsden's early diagnosis service, helping to detect cancer sooner. Using the latest diagnostic technology, staff are able to offer endoscopies, biopsies, tissue sampling and imaging, such as mammography and ultrasound.

The Oak Cancer Centre also includes the Goldman Sachs Centre for Urgent Care, funded

by Goldman Sachs Gives, where patients who are acutely unwell are quickly assessed and treated. Outpatients, Pharmacy and the Peter Stebbings Blood Test Unit are all located on the ground floor alongside waiting areas in a spacious and light filled atrium. With these departments on a single level, patients can undergo blood tests, see their consultant and collect a prescription easily, improving accessibility.

More than 400 researchers have been brought together in the Kuok Research Centre, where they are carrying out innovative research to develop lifesaving diagnostic methods and treatments. Since the opening of the Oak Cancer Centre, over 170 new studies have been launched by 20 different teams based in the centre, investigating many different tumour types. These studies are helping to extend, improve and save the lives of cancer patients around the world.

The opening of the Oak Cancer Centre was a landmark moment in the history of The Royal Marsden and The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity. We are hugely grateful to everyone who helped make the Oak Cancer Centre possible.

**HRH Prince William,
Prince of Wales at
the opening of the
Oak Cancer Centre.**



Equipment



Treatment and care



Research



Patient environments

My story



Sam

Dad-of-two Sam Suriakumar was diagnosed with an inoperable diffuse brain tumour in 2020 when he was 34 years old, after collapsing on his way home from work.

“I woke up in hospital two days later. Through scans, it became clear that there was a low-grade tumour in my brain. My neurosurgeon explained that it was more of a web structure rather than a big mass. Therefore, he couldn’t easily remove it so sadly surgery was not an option. We decided to take a ‘watch-and-wait’ approach with anti-seizure medication, as the tumour wasn’t affecting my memory or my daily life in general.”

Sam had regular scans to monitor the tumour but three years later, in August 2023, when abnormal growth was detected, he was referred to The Royal Marsden.

“My neurosurgeon referred me to The Royal Marsden, as he felt that’s where I would be looked after the best. He was right – everyone at the hospital is fantastic. Every single person I’ve met has made me feel so comfortable. Every time I’ve gone there, I’ve gone in petrified, and I’ve come out just feeling a little bit more at ease.”

Through September and October 2023, Sam underwent 30 sessions of radiotherapy on a linear accelerator (Linac), which was funded by The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity.

Sam then started chemotherapy in December 2023 and is being treated in the Olayan Day Care Unit in the Oak Cancer Centre.

Sam said: “Walking into the Olayan Day Care Unit, you have to double check you’ve come to the right place. It’s like a first-class lounge, not a chemotherapy ward.

“You’re struck by the space, the light, the comfortable leather seating, the cleanliness, the friendly staff and just an ambience of peacefulness. The wonderful team of nurses and staff welcome you with the warmest smiles and deliver exceptional care.

“Chemotherapy is a hard process, but the Olayan Day Care Unit makes such a big difference. Feeling welcomed and safe while you’re undergoing treatment is a simple, yet hugely effective way of helping patients through their journeys.”

The wonderful team of nurses and staff welcome you with the warmest smiles and deliver exceptional care. Chemotherapy is a hard process, but the Olayan Day Care Unit makes such a big difference.

Sam, patient at The Royal Marsden.

Sam Suriakumar, patient at The Royal Marsden.



Equipment



Treatment and care



Research



Patient environments

My story

Mandy

After being diagnosed with myeloma in 2017, Mandy Hodges received chemotherapy followed by a stem cell transplant, and went into remission. However, in 2020 she relapsed and was referred to The Royal Marsden for more treatment.

Mandy has been on the ProMMise clinical trial since June 2023 and receives her treatment in the Olayan Day Care Unit in the Oak Cancer Centre.

“Having my treatment in the Oak Cancer Centre is a much nicer experience. It’s so bright and airy and spacious, you can find areas to be alone if you need to, it’s brilliant.

“I’m pleased to say that I have reached remission on the ProMMise trial, which feels like such a positive moment. My husband and I recently returned from a trip to Amsterdam for our 35th wedding anniversary, and it just felt wonderful to be away and feel well.”

Mandy has gone on to fundraise for The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity by taking part in events like the Walk 60 miles in October challenge. Her daughter Grace also ran the Royal Parks Half Marathon to raise money for the Charity.

“Knowing that amazing researchers are developing treatments for me, and others like me with cancer, so close by in the same building, is very reassuring. As a patient who is currently benefitting from a clinical trial, it gives me so much hope for the future.”

Mandy, patient at The Royal Marsden.

“I’ve been treated at The Royal Marsden for a number of years and to fundraise towards the building of the Oak Cancer Centre, and now to be a patient in the building and benefiting from the amazing modern space, feels very special.

“Knowing that amazing researchers are developing treatments for me, and others like me with cancer, so close by in the same building, is very reassuring. As a patient who is currently benefitting from a clinical trial, it gives me so much hope for the future that we have this pioneering work going on in the same space.”





Equipment



Treatment and care



Research



Patient environments

Mandy Hodges, patient
at The Royal Marsden.

Centre Urgent

Dr Charlotte Fribbens, Consultant Medical Oncologist, in the Goldman Sachs Centre for Urgent Care, Oak Cancer Centre, Sutton.



Delivering faster, expert treatment

In the Goldman Sachs Centre for Urgent Care within the Oak Cancer Centre, staff care for those patients who require rapid assessment and treatment.

The modern, spacious facility, which includes private procedure rooms, is located on the same floor as the Olayan Day Care Unit, meaning patients can be quickly transferred if they need to be seen by acute oncology staff, such as if they become suddenly unwell due to their symptoms, or experience treatment side effects. This reduces the likelihood of patients needing to be transferred and admitted to an emergency department elsewhere or needing to stay in hospital for a longer period of time.

Dr Charlotte Fribbens, Consultant Medical Oncologist, works in the Goldman Sachs Centre for Urgent Care. She specialises in gastrointestinal cancers and acute oncology.

“The new Goldman Sachs Centre for Urgent Care allows us to care for patients in an exceptional environment and matches the level of excellence delivered by our clinical teams working within Acute Oncology. The larger unit also increases the number of patients who can be seen by the specialist team and treated onsite.”

Melissa Balcorta, Lead Advanced Nurse Practitioner, added: “Previously, for procedures like abdominal paracentesis (the draining of excess fluid on the wall of the abdomen), patients needed to be in hospital for two to three days. In the Goldman Sachs Centre for Urgent Care, patients needing this procedure predominantly return home the very same day – this is a fantastic result, meaning they can get back to their lives sooner.”



Equipment



Treatment and care



Research



Patient environments

Julie Rose and Machaela Smith
taking part in London to Paris Cycle 2023.



Thank you

All of us at The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity would like to thank everyone who has supported us over the last year.

Your unbelievable dedication and generosity enables us to support people with cancer, so they can receive the very best care, benefit from the latest research and have treatment using the most advanced equipment.

We would especially like to thank the following supporters, as well as those who have chosen to remain anonymous.



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The Banham Marsden March 2023.





Charlotte Barnard Skydiving.



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Without the generosity and passion of our dedicated supporters, The Royal Marsden would simply not be able to help so many cancer patients and their loved ones. But we cannot stand still. More and more people are diagnosed with cancer every year, and we must ensure that cancer patients everywhere can receive the latest treatment.

There are so many ways you can help us continue to make a difference to the lives of those affected by cancer. Whether you choose to take part in an event, fundraise for us, make a donation, or leave a gift in your Will – your support, however big or small, has the potential to save lives.

Find out more

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Olga Murden running the
Royal Parks Half Marathon 2023.

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